

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01

STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 AGR-05

/098 W

----- 069884

R 101146Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8677

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0035

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EAGR, EC, FR

SUBJECT: FARM DEMONSTRATIONS -- ONE WEEK AFTER

REF: (A) PARIS 6957, (B) PARIS 6641, (C) MARSEILLE 98,  
(D) MARSEILLE 99

SUMMARY. AS NOTED IN REFTELS, THE EC DECISIONS ON FARM  
PRICES MAY HAVE HELPED CALM TEMPERS OF WINEGROWERS IN  
THE SOUTH OF FRANCE. MOREOVER, THE CANTONAL ELECTION  
CAMPAIGN HAS TEMPORARILY TAKEN AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS  
OFF THE FRONT PAGES. NEVERTHELESS, THE SITUATION  
REMAINS TOUCHY, WITH THE GOF CAUGHT BETWEEN TWIN  
PRESSURES OF EC COMMITMENTS ON THE ONE HAND AND VERY  
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REAL PRODEMS POSED BY CUT RATE ITALIAN WINE IN THIS

ONE-INDUSTRY REGION. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTELS REPORTED THE EVENTS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, WHICH CULMINATED IN TWO DEATHS (ONE FARMER, ONE POLICE OFFICER) AND SOME 40 WOUNDED IN A SHOOT-OUT BETWEEN WINEGROWERS AND POLICE. OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, FRENCH PUBLIC REACTION WAS FIRST ONE OF SURPRISE AND THEN SHOCK AS EVENTS SEEMINGLY WERE ALLOWED TO GET OUT OF HAND. RESULT HAS BEEN THAT THE ROLE OF THE GOF AND OF THE PRINCIPAL CABINET MEMBER INVOLVED (INTERIOR MINISTER MICHEL PONIATOWSKI) HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO QUESTION.

2. WHILE MAKING FEW ALLOWANCES FOR THE BLATANT LAW-LESSNESS OF THE WINEGROWERS IN CUTTING ROADS, SETTING FIRE TO A TRAIN, VANDALIZING GOVERNMENT TAX OFFICES AND ALLEGEDLY FIRING THE FIRST SHOTS AGAINST THE POLICE, MANY NEWSPAPERS (PROBABLY REFLECTING MAJORITY PUBLIC OPINION) NONETHITLESS FAULT THE GOF FOR MISHANDLING A VOLATILE SITUATION. THE PRESS IS SHOWING SYMPATHY FOR THE LOT OF TRADITIONAL FARMERS, WHOSE IMAGE AMONG THE PUBLIC IS ONE OF HARD WORKERS, SLOWLY BEING OUTDATED IN A MODERN, URBANIZED SOCIETY AND IN THE MEANTIME SCRATCHING OUT AN INCOME, DWINDLING EACH YEAR IN TERMS OF PURCHASING POWER. HOWEVER FOLKLORIC THIS UNDERDOG IMAGE MAY BE, THE GOF HAS BEEN STERNLY CRITICIZED IN THE PRESS FOR DRAGGING ITS FEET SINCE 1973, WHEN THIS PARTICULAR WINE PROBLEM BEGAN. DESPITE THE PERSONAL INTERVENTION OF PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC LAST YEAR, PROMISES TO SET UP A SPECIAL WINE OFFICE IN GOF, TO NEGOTIATE HIGHER PRICES IN BRUSSELS AND TO CONTROL ITALIAN IMPORTS DID NOT GIVE THE RESULTS THE WINEGROWERS EXPECTED.

3. THE GOF'S RESPONSE AS THE AREA HEATED UP WAS TO DESPATCH HUNDREDS OF POLICE TO ENSURE SECURITY. ITS DECISION TO ARREST AND SEND TO A DISTANT JAIL TWO SUSPECTS ONLY ADDED OIL TO THE FIRE. WHY MAKE AN EXAMPLE (PERHAPS MARTYRS) OF THESE TWO,

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8678

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0036

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MANY ASKED, WHEN THE POLICE KNEW THAT MANY OTHERS HAD TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH WIDESPREAD DAMAGE? WHY WERE THEY RELEASED SO PRECIPITOUSLY AFTER THE SHOOTING? THE STOP-AND-GO TACTICS OF THE GOF WERE REMINISCENT OF LAST SUMMER'S HANDLING OF CORSICA. HAVING INITIALLY CRACKED DOWN HARD ON THE DEMONSTRATORS (PERHAPS RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC'S SYMPATHY FOR LAW-AND-ORDER ACTIONS BY THE POLICE IN THE FACE OF A RECENT RASH OF CRIMINALITY), PONIATOWSKI MADE A QUICK ABOUT-FACE WHEN HE SAW THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FARMERS WERE PREPARED TO GO -- EVEN AT THE COST OF HUMAN LIVES. PERHAPS JUDGING THAT NOW IS A TIME TO MOVE CAREFULLY, THE GOF HAS NOT YET

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ARRESTED ANYONE SPECIFICALLY CHARGED WITH THE KILLING

OF THE POLICE CAPTAIN, WHOSE FUNERAL PONIATOWSKI ATTENDED ON MARCH 9.

4. THESE EVENTS SHOULD NOT BE READ TO MEAN THAT THERE IS A NATIONAL RISING SENTIMENT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE COMPLAINTS ARE REGIONAL AND TIED TO A SPECIFIC ISSUE. PONIATOWSKI WAS RECENTLY BROUGHT TO HEEL BY THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS EXCESSES IN PUBLICLY PREJUDGING A MAN SUSPECTED OF MURDER, AND IN CALLING FOR THE DEATH PENALTY (PARIS 6815). BUT HE WILL PROBABLY AVOID THE SAME FATE IN THE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIR BECAUSE 1) THE ENTIRE GOF IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE POLICY; AND 2) THE ISSUES ARE MORE COMPLEX. BUT THE PRESS HAS BEEN LESS KIND AND MANY FEEL THE ISSUE WILL RETURN. THE BRUSSELS DECISION AND OTHER GOF MEASURES HAVE BOUGHT TIME BUT HAVE NOT SOLVED THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF THE WINEGROWERS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE GOF MAKES GOOD USE OF THIS TIME, NOT ONLY TO CALM TEMPERS BUT ALSO TO TACKLE THE MORE BASIC WINE PROBLEMS.  
RUSH

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, WINES, POLITICAL SITUATION, AGRICULTURAL PRICES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 MAR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PINT, EAGR, EC, FR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006